Thank you, Madame President. Excellencies and distinguished colleagues, it is wonderful to be in Nairobi with you to realize this Assembly’s vision of finding harmony between humanity and nature.

I would like to thank Executive Director Andersen [AN-DER-SON] and the entire UNEP team for the dedication that went into making UNEA-6 successful.

The United States is firmly committed to advancing global security and prosperity, which requires a dynamic science and technology community to support a healthy and resilient planet.
As the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, I am here to further partnerships that fortify this foundation.

In particular, I want to talk about the importance of improving air quality and combating nature crimes.

We know air pollution is one of the greatest environmental risks to human health. We also know air pollution’s adverse effects on our land and water ecosystems is leading to significant biodiversity loss.

That is why the United States and our co-sponsors are pleased to see a successful resolution to improve air quality.

This resolution will support regional cooperation, because air pollution does not stop at national borders. This resolution will unlock important capacity building and knowledge sharing to improve air quality for people around the world.
We are grateful to our co-proponent, Canada, as well as our additional 33 co-sponsors for their support in getting this resolution across the finish line.

We also know we cannot meet our biodiversity goals without addressing nature crimes – wildlife and timber trafficking, illegal mining, illegal land conversion, as well as crimes associated with fishing.

These crimes destroy ecosystems and finance transnational criminal organizations that prey on the world’s most vulnerable populations.

That is why we are proud to be a founding member of the Nature Crime Alliance.

We are meeting on the two-year anniversary of the start of Russia’s unprovoked and illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The United States condemns Russia’s senseless destruction
and degradation of Ukraine’s environment. It will be years before we know the full extent of the environmental damage, which reaches well beyond Ukraine’s borders. As evidenced by the joint statement that my delegation delivered Monday on behalf of 41 countries, the United States and our allies and partners continue to firmly stand with the people of Ukraine as they defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and freedom.

Some delegations mentioned the Israel/Hamas conflict but failed to recognize that the conflict — and its terrible consequences for both Israelis and Palestinians — began with the barbaric terrorist attack that Hamas carried out against Israel on October 7th.

We grieve for all those who have been killed and displaced – both Israelis and Palestinians alike.
As Secretary Blinken has noted, “we remain determined...to pursue a diplomatic path to a just and lasting peace, and security for all in the region.”

In closing, the United States is firmly committed to addressing pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change to protect and conserve our planet.

Our cooperation here at UNEA-6 and elsewhere will be vital to ensure our planet and all its treasures are sustained for future generations.

The United States looks forward to addressing these challenges together with you. Thank you.
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